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The Catholic Layman.

DUBLIN, JUNE 19, 1857.

THE apparition of La Salette, already familiar to our readers, has again become the subject of judicial investigation in France.

Mademoiselle Lamerlière, it will be remembered, brought an action, in the civil court at Grenoble, against the Abbé Deléon and Cartilier (the authors of the book called "La Salette devant Le Pape," in which they undertook to prove that it was she who personated the Blessed Virgin on the mountain of La Salette, on the 19th September, 1846), in which she claimed 20,000 francs damages, but was defeated, with costs, on the 2nd May, 1855.

From the decision of this tribunal she appealed to the Imperial Court, and has been again defeated, and, in like manner, with costs. The judgment was pronounced on the 6th May (ult.), and is given shortly by the French journals in the following words:—

"The Court, having heard the arguments of M. Almeras Latour (the Attorney-General), and not finding it necessary to go into all the arguments used for Mademoiselle de Lamerlière, and which had failed, considers her appeal against the judgment given by the civil tribunal of Grenoble, 2nd May, 1855, and declares it to be unfounded—confirms the said judgment—orders that it should be carried out to its fullest extent, and condemns the appellant to a fine and costs."

The *Siècle* of the 10th May last refers to the subject, and discloses a new fact connected with it, that Mdlle. Lamerlière actually *confessed* to the Abbé Burnoud that it was she who played the part of the Virgin on that occasion, which appears to be likely to give rise to another legal inquiry before the civil tribunals. The announcement of the *Siècle* is as follows:—

"In a former article we promised our readers an edifying story, and we now fulfil our promise. But, first of all, and in order to avoid confusion, we clearly state the facts which, after eleven years, have again brought up the tricks and scandals from whence, armed *cap-a-pie* like ancient Minerva, issued the miracle of La Salette. Mdlle. Lamerlière appealed to the Imperial Court to reverse the sentence pronounced against her by the civil tribunal of Grenoble. The Salettins declared the first judges to be Voltairians, impious enemies of religion. What will they say now of the magistrates, who adopt and confirm all the points of the previous sentence? Law proceedings have now been commenced by the Abbé Deléon (whose writings, declared by the tribunal to contain no libellous matter, expose the whole affair) against the Abbé Burnoud, late superior of the Salette missionaries. The Abbé Deléon requests the tribunal of Vienne to declare false, calumnious, and defamatory, certain assertions of the Abbé Burnoud, to condemn him in 3,000*f.* damages, and to prove that Mdlle. Lamerlière herself performed the apparition, of which shameless mystification the Abbé Burnoud was perfectly well aware. However distinct these two trials may be, they have a great analogy to each other. They are both destined to show up the falsehoods and cunning by which faith is led astray, and the trust and credulity of the people wrought upon."

For the sake of such of our readers as may not have seen our articles of April, 1853, Oct., 1854, June and July, 1855, and April, 1856, on this subject, we insert here the brief account of the matter as given by the *Siècle*:—

"It was on the 19th September, 1846, that the Holy Virgin—so say the Salettins—appeared on the mountain

of La Salette to a young boy and girl keeping their flock. Overcome by the heat, the children, according to custom, had gone to sleep in the cleft of a ravine. A sweet harmony, proceeding doubtless from a musical snuff-box, awoke the little sleepers, who, on opening their eyes, saw before them a fine lady robed in a splendid yellow dress, wearing varnished shoes and with a head-dress of ribbons and flowers, 'I am the Holy Virgin,' said the lady, and thereupon commenced a discourse, showing that all the evils in France came from the non-observance of the Sunday rest. The children heard, but understood not. The Holy Virgin had forgotten that the little peasants only spoke *patois*, but the Queen of Heaven could not be baffled by so trivial a circumstance. She recommenced her discourse in the purest idiom of Dauphiné. The children, according to her instructions, immediately noised the matter abroad. The news of the miracle was like a thunder-clap. Pilgrimages began, chapels arose, medals were struck, inns were opened, Salette water was sold—the very water concerning which an episcopal decision of 1847 affirms that it 'cures all diseases of the body, and converts all the most inveterate sinners who are made to swallow a few drops of it, even against their will.'"

Such is the account of the apparition and its results, as described in the Parisian journals. The same article then proceeds to narrate the circumstances out of which the new action has originated, and to comment upon it, as follows:

"One evening, January 11, 1855—and it is the Abbé Deléon himself who gives, in a pamphlet before us, the account which we now merely abridge:—One evening, the Canons Rousselot, Gay, Revel, and Gillos; a Jesuit, Valgalier; and Abbé Saunier, were dining together at M. Lamanché's, chaplain of Ursula. The miracle was the subject of conversation, and the articles of the *Siècle* and the incontestable right of Mdlle. Lamerlière to commence proceedings against us for libel were brought forward.

"If we are judged according to those articles,' said sorrowfully the Canon Rousselot, 'my lord (Bishop of Grenoble) is a swindler, and I am a teller of falsehoods.'"

"But if you are right,' answered his colleague, Canon Gillos, 'why submit to the insult, why not proceed against the journal and the author of the articles?'"

"I should be willing,' replied M. Rousselot, 'but Monseigneur opposes it!'"

"Why,' said the other, 'what do you fear? The expense? Appeal to the clergy; there is not a priest who, for the honour of his robe, would not send his donation with alacrity.'"

"That is not the point,' cried one of the priests, 'there is much thought necessary before entering on such a course.'"

"Thought!' said M. Gillos. 'Do the Lamerlière proceedings make you hesitate? What have you to fear from that woman? Are you not sure to command her?'"

"It is no easy thing,' said the Abbé Burnoud, superior of the Salette missionaries. 'She is compromising enough, and when you fancy you have got hold of her she escapes.'"

"I do not understand what you can have to fear from her,' sharply answered M. Gillos.

"She admitted to me,' humbly replied the Abbé Burnoud, 'that it was she who made the apparition.'"

"Judge of the general stupefaction; Canon Rousselot grew pale; looks of terror were exchanged; and, pressed to explain himself, the Abbé Burnoud added:

"I was conversing with Mdlle. Lamerlière, and expatiating on the success of the Salette pilgrimage. The churches,' said I, 'were deserted, the worship of the Virgin was forgotten. Now see how faith has awakened, how the worship of the Virgin increases and shines daily with more and more *éclat*. What a grand thing you did, and how it has spread.' To which Mdlle. Lamerlière replied, 'Did I not? Oh! I knew it well when I did it.'"

"This artless avowal threw the Abbé Gillos, one of the most learned and upright priests of the diocese of Grenoble, into consternation. In his straightforwardness, he marvelled that any one could support and make money of a miracle whose human origin they were acquainted with.

"The Abbé Gillos gives the details we have just summed up, and the Abbé Deléon offers to have their truth certified by oath before the tribunal of Vienne, where the proceedings he has commenced against the Abbé Burnoud are to take place.

"This, then, is the state of the case. A miracle is affirmed, and this miracle is a piece of knavery. Men have unworthily worked upon the most lofty and honourable sentiment which can fill a human soul—faith. Fabulously large sums have been collected; credulous populations have been enticed on pilgrimage; the water of La Salette has become an article of trade; and a bishop

We are informed that the title of the pamphlet referred to is, "Mémoire pour M. l'Abbé Burnoud, ancien supérieur des missionnaires de la Salette. Une brochure in 8vo., imprimerie de F. Blanc, a Grenoble, rue Bayard;" but we have not yet succeeded in procuring a copy of it.

"Elle m'a avoué, répond humblement alors M. l'Abbé Burnoud, que c'était elle qui avait fait l'apparition."

has been found to announce to Christendom that this water heals all diseases of the body, and converts all the most inveterate sinners who are made to swallow a few drops of it, even against their will.

"The heroine of this mystification had already gained some celebrity in 1848, in the clubs of Grenoble, Romans, and Valence. The Abbé Deléon says she was the general laughing-stock, singing and dancing with all her *cortège* around the tree of liberty, and her enthusiasm was such that the police were obliged to interfere and close her house, which was a permanent club. What an affront for the Virgin of 1846! Yes, there is a true miracle in it. Not in the apparition to the two children, Maximin Giraud and Mélanie Mathieu, who have both turned out far from well; but in the audacity shown in the past and present working to the best advantage of this knavish trick.

"How should religion bear up under such stunning blows inflicted upon her by the very men who call themselves her ministers and most zealous defenders!"—*Louis Jourdan, Siècle, May 10th, 1857.*"

We think any further comment upon this sad *exposé* than that of M. Louis Jourdan in the above paragraph would be superfluous. We feel for those honourable Roman Catholics who blush that any ecclesiastics of their Church should be involved in such an unholy traffic in sacred things, and we shall, therefore, merely add a single passage from another article in the same French journal, which shows how strongly the disgrace of such an imposture is felt in France by those who are not its dupes—

"If the doctrine of Christ—the doctrine of love and fraternity—could perish, it would be engulfed by such an impious avalanche as this."—*Siècle, May 6, 1857.*

CHARGE OF THE ARCHDEACON OF MIDDLESEX.

THE following extracts from the charge of the Venerable John Sinclair, M.A., Archdeacon of Middlesex, delivered at the visitation of the clergy of London, held in St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden, on the 4th inst., are, we think, well deserving of the attention of our readers. We regret that we have not space to reproduce the whole document in our pages:—

"Among the public documents which have lately issued from the Romish press there are not many so deserving of notice as the pastoral letter of Baron Ketteler, Bishop of Mentz, and in that capacity successor of St. Boniface, the apostle of the Germans. In this letter a passage occurs in which his lordship has instituted a comparison (and certainly it is a startling one) between the German Reformers casting off the yoke of Rome and the unbelieving Jews crucifying their Messiah. 'As the Jewish nation,' says the bishop, 'lost its vocation upon earth when it crucified the Messiah, so did the German nation forfeit its high vocation in the kingdom of God when it broke the unity of faith which had been established by St. Boniface.'"

"On reading this comparison I searched the context to see the grounds of it, but I searched in vain. His lordship did not think it necessary to produce the proofs of his allegation. I then considered, if a parallel must be drawn between the ancient Jews and any party in modern times, whether that modern party does not consist of the co-religionists of St. Boniface and the bishop rather than of the Reformers. I do not mean that I would charge the Romanists, as a body, with the guilt of crucifying the Messiah, as the Roman Catholic bishop accuses the Protestants of Germany; but I maintain that in another view there is between the Jews and the Romanists a wonderful correspondence, approaching almost to identity. The arguments of the Jews against Christianity and those of the Romanists against the Reformation are the very same; and the answer returned by the early Christians to Jewish cavils and objections forms the very answer which Protestants should return to the cavils and objections of their Romanist opposers. Thus, the Jew alleged the infallibility of his Church; so also does the Romanist. The Jew pleaded the antiquity of its doctrines and ordinances; so also does the Romanist. The Jew alleged the mean origin of Christianity as an objection to its truth; the Romanist makes the same objection to the Reformation.

"This parallel certainly is better founded than that of the Roman Catholic prelate, and it seems to me peculiarly adapted to meet the case, now too frequent, of persons who allow themselves to be overawed by the magnificent pretensions of the Church of Rome. It is astonishing with what facility susceptible and timid minds are led away by bold and confident assumptions. When they hear of a Church which claims the high attributes of 'unity,' 'antiquity,' 'universality,' 'infallibility,' and the exclusive possession of 'miraculous powers,' instead of inquiring, as common sense directs, into the grounds of these imposing pretensions—instead of 'proving all things,' as the Holy Scriptures enjoin, and 'holding fast that which is good,' they allow themselves to be persuaded that all inquiry is sinful; that to